

Reflexions
UPON THE
IDOLATRY
OF THE
JESUITS,
AND
Other Affairs relating to Religion
IN
CHINA.

Written Originally in *Italian*; Translated into
French; now made *English* from the *Paris*
Copy, by a Gentleman at the *Hague*,
and sent in a Letter to

The Reverend Dr. *Francis Atterbury*.

L O N D O N:

Printed by *H. Hills*, and Sold by the Bookseller
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OF THE
TESTAMENTS
Other Affairs relating to Religion

CHINA

The Reverend Dr. Francis Johnson
and his wife in a letter to
Copley, by a Gentleman at the
French Consulate in the
City of London in the year
1700. Printed in London by
J. Smith in the Strand.

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of London and Westminster.

Hague, Octob. 5. O. S. 1709.

TO THE
Reverend Dr. Francis Atterbury.

Reverend Sir,

THE following little Piece having been just Printed at Paris, under the following Title, *Réflexions sur les Affaires présentes de la Chine. Ecrit traduit de l'Italien, and communicated to me as a very great Rarity, (by reason it is not sold, but handed about privately) I apply'd my self to a careful Perusal, and immediately found in it much Sophistry, but more Design; (having often, Sir, heard You express a more than ordinary Desire, of being thoroughly acquainted with the French Writers, towards which you have already made a curious Collection of their most Eminent Ecclesiasticks;) and being oblig'd to return it to the Gentleman who lent it me, I have, Sir, (in acknowledgment of the many Favours receiv'd from You) attempted a Translation of it; which since the French Copy is not to be had, will, I hope, meet with as favourable a Reception, as is meant in the Offer.*

In Reading it over I could not forbear remarking, and had once some thoughts of hinting my Observations to You; but considering, Sir, that the Design of the most cunning Parts of it will appear at first View upon your perusal of it, I submit the whole to your Judgment.

The French Publisher wou'd have it thought only a Translation from the Italian, which I take to be a Feint, that the Author might be the less suspected; I make no doubt, Sir, but you have seen what Pieces have been already made publick, relating to the Affairs of the Missioners in China upon which these Reflexions are made. The Author's seeming Design is only some pacificatory Advice, for the healing those Breaches occasion'd by the over-zealous Heat in those Parts, by which they have in some measure, as he thinks, retarded the Progress of Propagating the Christian Religion.

But to detain you, Sir, no longer from the Tract it self, I remain

Yours on all Occasions to Command,

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R. P



Advertisement

Of the French Translator.

WHat I here offer is only the Translation of an Italian Original, which has already seen several Impressions. 'Tis confidently affirm'd to come from the Hand of a Secular Gentleman; but whoever the Author may be, the Translator is an *ABBE*. His only aim in this small Performance is to gratify the Curiosity, or rather Impatience, of the Publick; for no Body imagines that the Jesuits will permit the new Writings of their Adversaries to pass unanswer'd. Whereas these Fathers have upon all Occasions Discours'd upon this present Subject with much Caution and Moderation, he thought it became him to imitate their Example; by softening certain Passages in these Reflexions, where they seem'd a little too severe. He has also omitted unnecessary Repetitions, or what he found less material to the Cause in hand. In all other Respects the Translation is very Faithful, and he only speaks the true Sense of the Author.

Re-



Reflexions upon the Idolatry of the Jesuits in China.

REFLEXION I.

WHEN a Man sets himself to consider the present State of the Affairs of *China*; the first Motion that arises in the Heart of every good Christian is, to wish that the Intention wherewith the *Chinese* practice their Ceremonies, may have nothing reprehensible in it, so as perfectly to agree with the Profession of our Faith. The very fear that these Ceremonies shou'd be superstitious, and that by condemning them Religion shou'd be expos'd to an evident Danger of being destroy'd in *China*, this Apprehension alone, I say, ought to be a sensible Affliction to whoever makes Profession of the Law of *Jesus Christ*.

The Zeal and Charity which we all owe to our Brethren, ought to extend it self no less to this far distant Christianity, than to *Italy*, *Spain*, or any other Neighbouring Country, were the like Danger impending over it. That Person therefore who shou'd be fearful lest the Ceremonies inform'd against, shou'd after all prove blameless, who shou'd discover in his Heart a secret Satisfaction to see the Defenders of them mortify'd, and shou'd be glad of the Occasion that this vast Empire shou'd remain under the Power of the Devil, with the loss of so many Souls; he that shou'd speak of all this with Joy, such a One having these Sentiments and Practices, must needs have little of the Christian in him, and whom Hatred and Jealousy must have depriv'd of all Sense of Charity.

R E-

REFLECTION II.

IN like manner, when it is known to the true Sons of the Church, that the Emperor has declar'd the Ceremonies in question to be purely civil; that the Learned and Doctors of the Empire judge the same; that this Sentiment is confirm'd by their *Classic* Authors, that the Christians have depos'd it upon Oath, and sent Attestations thereof to Rome; that almost all the Bishops and Missioners are of the same Opinion: The true Sons of the Church perceive within themselves a certain Joy, which makes them lift up their Hands to bless the Almighty. If so, it follows that they who shou'd be dissatisfy'd, who at the bottom of their Hearts shou'd wish that the Emperour was found in a Lye, the Christians perjurd, and the Missioners no better than Cheats: Those who shou'd have such Sentiments, and shew as much by their Discourses and Actions, by spreading defamatory Libels, or what is yet worse, by declaiming from the Pulpit upon this Subject; Men of this Character wou'd certainly be unworthy to be cherish'd in the Bosom of the Church, that good Mother which so tenderly loves all her Children, and particularly the new converted Christians.

REFLECTION III.

THis being suppos'd, his Holiness the Pope, who as Vicar of *Jesus Christ* is to give an exact Account of the Souls committed to his Charge, and of the *Depositum* of Faith: This Sovereign Bishop, when he sent his *Apostolical Legat* into China, to receive by him more certain Informations of the State of Religion in that Empire: Undoubtedly did not say to him, Go, and omit nothing that may make the Chinese Ceremonies appear Idolatrous; forbid the Missioners to consult the Emperour upon those Matters, because the Light which they might receive from him, might ascertain the lawfulness of the contrary Opinion. If the new Christians shou'd present you any Memorials upon this Affair, fail not to tear them in their Presence, and trample them under Foot; and if any Tumult shou'd arise from thence, cast the Fault upon the Jesuits. Above all forget not to treat those Fathers rudely, and particularly in the Presence of the Mandarins: Declare them Usurers, Perjur'd, and Lyars; bring them, if possible, to the Bar. Let all the Court perceive
that

that you look upon them as vile Souls, unworthy of the Emperor's Esteem. Make known to all China, that the Faith which they have Preach'd, is different from the Christian Religion. Whoever shou'd suspect the Pope, who is so Equitable and Just, to have given such Orders, or to be capable of forming so detestable a Design, wou'd be guilty of Sacrilege and an enormous Crime, from which nothing but Drunkenness or Madness cou'd excuse him.

REFLEXION IV.

THE Instructions which his Holiness gave to his Legats must certainly have been the Orders of a Father, altho' resolute and efficacious, yet full of Goodness, paternal Love, and Christian Charity.

I imagine to my self, nor is it an empty and vain Thought, that he deliver'd himself to this Effect. *We are between two dangerous Rocks.* On the one side, is represented to us that the Chinese Ceremonies are Idolatrous: I tremble, and am seiz'd with Horror, when I think that perhaps I shall be oblig'd to condemn them. On the other side, the Emperor himself, and the greatest part of the Missioners assure me, that these Ceremonies are purely civil and irreprehensible. If therefore it shou'd happen, that I pass Condemnation upon them, it wou'd blast this hopeful Vineyard, and the loss of a Multitude of Souls wou'd be imputed to me. The Language of China is altogether unknown to us: For which reason, we cannot pronounce (as in the Affair of Jansenius) upon the precise Sense of the Chinese Books, of which the two contending Parties give different Explanations, since the Entrance into China of some Missioners of another Stamp than those who were there before, we hear of nothing but Disputes, Libels, and Accusations. This gives some Grounds to fear, lest our holy Religion shou'd be banish'd from that Empire, as it has been from some Neighbouring Kingdoms, under Colour of its being the Source of Divisions and Troubles, and so be suppress'd for ever throughout all Asia.

Go then as an Angel of Peace! as an Angel of Counsel! To put an End to these Debates, perhaps the greatest that have hitherto been seen in the Church of God. Be sure not to shew your self byass'd more to one Parry than another. Take care that no one adhere to your Opinion thro' Flattery, and make your Friendship subservient to his private Ends.

I wou'd not have you give your self up blindly to the Jesuits, even tho' you shou'd find some Dominican for them, as at other times seve-

ral have been found, even of Bishops who have writ, and declar'd themselves for their Opinion; but I also admonish you on the other hand, not to abandon your self to the Direction of their Adversaries, and their principal Accuser.

Mistrust those whom you shall see transported with too much heat in the present dispute. Listen peaceably to every one; and if you find some faults among the Missioners, cover those faults with the Zeal of a holy Charity, to the end the new Christians may not be scandaliz'd. Propose for your Example what St. Francis de Sales, your own Country-man wou'd have done in the like Conjunction.

The diversity of Opinions which you will find amongst a Heathen People, ought not to alarm you: You know that the like Disagreement is often found in Christian Nations. You are to take your informations from the Learned of the Kingdom, from the Publick Doctors, and principally from the Emperor himself, who is the Head of the Learned, and speaks in the Name of the whole Empire. It belongs to him to declare the true Sense of the Chinese Books; and after that, 'tis our part to declare whether the Explanation he gives, is consonant to our holy Faith.

You are to inform your self, whether the Answer of the Prince to the Queries of the Jesuits, which has appear'd in his Name, and been dispers'd thro' all Europe, be truly his or no. If you find this Answer to be really the Emperor's, and that it is conformable to the Opinions of the Learned, and the Explanation they give of their Books, and that it agrees with the Persuasion of the greatest Part of the Missioners, we shall then on our part have acquitted our selves with all the Diligence that a discreet Zeal prescribes. The wise Constitution of our Predecessor Alexander the Seventh will by that means be confirm'd, and we shall have nothing to reproach our selves with for the loss of this great Empire.

But shou'd it happen, which is no ways probable, that there be a Collusion between the Jesuits, and the greatest part of the Missioners, with intention to deceive us; that the Emperor, and all the Learned shou'd have betray'd the Truth in compliance with those Fathers; that all the Christians shou'd be guilty of Perjury, and all this were morally certain. In fine, shou'd you find your self oblig'd to dart forth your Thunder, and provoke a Prince, who otherwise is so affectionate to our Religion, that he protects it, and he gives free leave to Preach the Gospel through the whole Empire: 'Tis easy to conceive what our Grief wou'd be; what the Grief of the whole Church, at the Sight of so many thousands of her Children expos'd to be lost for ever.

Wherefore try all the ways of Sweetness; assemble those in whom
there

there shou'd remain some Zeal for the Catholick Religion ; apply your self to gain them, instruct them, consult with them, whether no means may be found to abolish these Ceremonies by little and little, and without Noise ; make use of a fatherly Goodness, omit nothing which Christian Charity can suggest in relation to the Christians and Missioners.

But lastly, shou'd it be found necessary, to proceed to a definitive Sentence for extirpating this Evil ; Be the first to appear in the Imperial City at the Head of your Companions, fail not there to give in the Presence of the whole Court, and of the principal Missioners, a noble Example of Christian Fortitude, and without shrinking expect a glorious Martyrdom, which will add more Lustre to your Birth, than ever it can receive from the Roman Purple.

'Tis unquestionable that the Pope did give to his Legat more mild and more efficacious Orders than these, and that he prescrib'd to him more wise Precautions than I can imagine. He knows himself to be common Father ; that the *Depositorium* of Faith is intrusted to his Charge ; and he, like the Saviour of the World, desires that all Men might be sav'd.

REFLEXION V.

I Shall not go about to entertain you with the Particulars, how the Legat behav'd himself in so difficult an Enterprize, and capable of striking Terrour into the greatest Saint. To be inform'd of them, you need only read the faithful Journal sent from *China* ; A Treatise written with regret, but however full of filial Respect towards the Holy See, and for the Person of the Patriarch, now Cardinal.

'Tis certainly an incredible thing, and hitherto unheard of, that an Infidel Emperor shou'd use all his Endeavours to maintain the Christian Religion in his Empire, by declaring what are the Intentions of his People in the Practice of their Ceremonies ; by shewing himself ready to clear the Difficulties which might remain in that Concern, referring at the same time to his Holiness the Pope the Dicision of what is allowable, and what not ; by ordering to be laid before him in writing those Points of the *Chinese* Doctrine which are not agreeable to our Religion, and protesting that it is not his fault, if the Christian Religion be banish'd from *China*.

But

But it is yet more incredible, that an Apostolical Legat fearing that such an important Truth shou'd come to Light, shou'd forbid under the severest Penalties, that any one shou'd consult the Emperor upon the Controverted Points; that he shou'd declare, that they were wholly to stand by the *Chinese* Books, without ever addressing himself either to the Emperor or to the Learned of the Empire, to be instructed in the Sense of those Books, but that it belong'd to the Europeans, notwithstanding their Ignorance in the Matter, to explain them.

One thing of Importance deserves the Reader's Observation. The present Emperor of *China* not being a Native, distrusts the Fidelity of his Subjects; and by consequence 'twou'd be hard to believe, that he, contrary to all Policy, shou'd go about to lower the Honours that are given to *Confucius* and his Ancestors, by making them pass for Ceremonies purely human and civil, if this was not the universal Sentiment of the Learned of the Empire.

But altho' (this also is worthy of attention) the Emperor himself, and the Learned, shou'd have made these Declarations upon the dubious Sense of their Books, thereby to render themselves conformable to the Dogma's of our holy Religion, by retrenching what might seem contrary to our Faith. I ask what they cou'd infer from thence? It wou'd be a manifest Sign, that the *Chinese*, after having read the innumerable Books upon Religion, which the Jesuits for more than an Age have spread thro' that vast Empire, are at length come to the Knowledge of the true God, that they have reform'd their Intentions, and by the Light of the Christian Religion have clear'd the obscure Texts of their Books.

Now what Indecency more odious both to God and Man can there be, than to see the Europeans ill vers'd in the Sciences of *China*, to give the Lye to the Emperor, and to all the Learned of the Empire, who assure us, that in these Ways of Speech, *May it please the Heavens, Heavens grant Heavens keep me*, they understand by the Word *Heavens*, what we Christians mean; that is, *the Lord, the Master, the King of Heaven*. Why then thus to betray the Holy Church, in the bosom

bosom of which this Empire seems to deposit all her Books that it may speak as she does, and conform its Speech to her Doctrine?

REFLEXION VI.

THE Legat is not ignorant of the Pains the Jesuits took to obtain for him of the Emperor leave to come to *Pekin*; now many Addresses they made, how many refusals they bore from that Prince, who now reproaches them with their want of Conduct in that Affair. Nor is he ignorant how advantageously those Fathers spoke of him; insomuch he was commonly call'd amongst the Christians of *Cbina*, the *Great Man come from the West*. He knows very well the unheard-of Honours that were done him, so far, as that the Emperor made him eat at his Table, and presented him to drink with his own Hands. These were the Effects of the high Esteem, which the Jesuits had inspir'd into that great Prince for the Sovereign Pontiff, and the Court of *Rome*. In fine, before these unfortunate Disputes appear'd at *Pekin*, a certain Jesuit that arriv'd from *Cbina* related to me these Words from the Mouth of the Emperor himself, Words which I still bear in Memory; *You shall see, that in time my whole Empire will embrace your Law*. This time was already come, and this Glory did seem to be reserv'd for the present Pontificate. The Joy we shou'd have had from the Conversion of that vast Empire, would without doubt have been very different from what certain People make now appear in dispersing the Mandate of the Legat, a Mandate which entirely ruins that afflicted Christianity.

REFLEXION VII.

BUT what is the meaning of all the Noise, all the Bustle which the Hereticks make in their Journals, upon occasion of these *Chinese* Ceremonies? Whence comes their excessive Eagerness, so edifying in appearance, to see these Ceremonies condemn'd? What Interest can they have in an Affair which concerns the Catholick Religion alone? The Interest they find in it is great, and perhaps nothing more favourable did ever happen to them. With-

Without entring into the Examination in this Place, whether the Pope can pronounce upon a Fact of this Nature, let us suppose that he actually has defin'd contrary to the Persuasion of the *Chinese*, that the Intention wherewith they Practice their Ceremonies is Superstitious and Idolatrous; all the World must needs see, that such a Declaration, whatever Qualification you give it, wou'd still be a formal giving the Lye to the Emperor, in the Face of the whole Empire.

This Prince has declar'd that by those Words written in his own Hand, *Adore Heaven*, he understood, as all the *Chinese* understand, *The Lord of Heaven*. No, Sir, say they, you understood the *material Heaven*. 'Tis to this material Heaven you sacrifice yearly. Your Language does not express the Sense of your Heart: We have certain Assurance from the *Europeans*, whom you have declar'd Ignorant in the Doctrine of the Empire, altho' they possess it much better than your self; and these are the Men we are to give Ear to, in the present Debates. This wou'd be the Substance of such a Declaration, whatever Art might be made use of in the Manner of expressing it.

Any Man of Sense wou'd easily conceive, to what degree of Resentment, such a Declaration must naturally inflame the Emperor. It wou'd infallibly draw after it the Banishment of all the Missioners, and an irreconcilable Hatred of that Prince against our Holy Faith. The Gates of *China* wou'd for ever be shut to all Catholicks, and by consequence the Hereticks wou'd be the sole Masters of the Traffick of that great Empire.

'Tis well known what has happen'd in *Japan*. The Hereticks taking Advantage of the Misunderstandings of the Missioners, found means to drive the *Portugeze* out of those Islands, and after that to work the Ruin of Christianity. What now appears to be a Dispute of Religion, will in time become a Crime against the State. At this very present, they publish in their Gazettes, that the Idolatry of the *Chinese* Ceremonies is manifest, and they have the Boldness to treat the Pope himself as an Idolater, if he does not condemn them. When they shall have got the upper hand in *China*, they will change

change their Note, they will not fail to say, that the Emperor's Indignation is most Just; that it did not belong to the Pope, to send his Orders into *China*, like a Sovereign Prince into his own Dominions; that he ought not to have intruded himself into Affairs, that are purely politick and civil, by sending an Ambassador to give Laws to the *Chinese* like a Master, and Condemn their Ceremonies upon the bare Testimony of some Ignorant Europeans, and declar'd such by the Emperor himself. They will also add according to their usual malice, that the principal Aim of this Embassy was, to introduce the *French* into those Kingdoms.

REFLEXION VIII.

SOME Persons may perhaps imagin, that it wou'd be an easy Matter to abolish those Ancient Customs of *China*. I very much doubt whether those Persons, as fertile as they may be in Expedients, wou'd find it so easy a Matter, if to compass such a Design, they were to renounce their Goods, their Employs, and their Dignities, as the *Chinese* must do. They who find so much facility in making the *Chinese* alter their Customs, wou'd they be so willing to change their own? Wou'd they have no repugnance, for example, to submit to the Orders of a Prince, who shou'd oblige them to go dress'd after a whimsical, fantastical Manner? Wou'd they willingly obey the Decree of a Pope, who shou'd abolish certain Scandalous Merriments, which in their first Institution were certainly Idolatrous? Such are the *Bacchanalia*, or *Carnivals*, which are still practis'd in some Countries, and which are no other, than the Remains of the Feast of *Bacchus*: Pastimes at which a *Chinese*, tho' an Idolater, wou'd blush to be present.

But, say some others, the *Chinese* Ceremonies, after the Manner they are set forth in the Books of their Accusers, have a certain Air that Shocks and Scandalizes. To this I answer, That there is nothing in this World, to which a Spiteful Wit may not give a Malicious Turn. For a convincing proof of this, let us make two or three Suppositions, which will render palpable the Truth of what I advance.

The

The *Bonza's* have introduc'd into *China* two infamous Deities: They are two Devils, who are Ador'd under the Names of *Amida* and *Xaca*. Let us suppose, that several *Chinese* Idolaters bear the Names of these Gods. After that, let us put the Case, that the Jesuits in conferring Baptism upon the *Neophytes*, impose these Sacrilegious Names, or permit those who have them, to retain them. This Accusation is brought to *Rome*, and the Fact is there expos'd with an Apostolick Zeal and Eloquence. These Sacrileges, say they, are committed in the most Sacred Ceremony of our Religion, in which from a Child of the Devil, it is made the Child of God. At the time that the Adorable Names of *Jesus Christ*, and the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are pronounc'd; who wou'd imagin that the Jesuits shou'd sound forth the abominable Names of those false Divinities?

Give me leave to ask, whether such an Exposition does not strike a horror: And yet, 'tis no more than what is permitted in *Italy*, and *Rome* it self, where they give to Christians the Names of *Diana*, and *Hercules*, &c. We read in *St. Paul's* Epistles, that some Christians of the Primitive Church were call'd *Apollo*, and *Phæbe*. The *Roman Martyrology* makes mention of the Birth of *St. Bacchus*, *St. Mercury*, *St. Nympha*, *St. Lucina*, Names which had been retain'd after Baptism by the fervent Christians of the Infant Church. These were things which the Catholick Church for just Reasons has tolerated; but this condescension wou'd no ways relish with some sort of People. They frame to us a God of Cruelty, which in truth is not the God of the Christians; and they wou'd Model the Church after the same Manner.

Let us suppose in the second Place, that in times past, there was a famous Courtizan, who is now ador'd as a Goddess; that all their Poetry is fill'd with the infamous Name of this Prostitute; that they have given this Name to a Star, and to one of the Days of the Week. Upon this the Jesuits are accus'd at *Rome*, they permit, say they, that the very Day on which our Saviour dy'd upon the Cross for the Salvation of Mankind, upon which he destroy'd Idolatry by his Sacred Passion, they permit this very Day to be dishonour'd by the

infamous

infamous Name of this abominable Goddess. This wou'd be just like one of the darling Declamations, with which they have stuff'd their Libels publish'd against the Ceremonies of *China*.

And yet, all things well consider'd, this is no more than our *Friday*, in Latin *Dies Veneris*, thus call'd from the Name of *Venus*. 'Tis true, this day ought to have lost its Name by a Decree of St. *Sylvester*; but a contrary use has prevail'd; that Name, as infamous as it is in the Original, does now no more Shock the Ears of Christians; on the contrary, it now fills them with a holy compunction. In like Manner, altho' the *Chinese* Ceremonies seem to have something grating, when they are only consider'd with Relation to certain outward Appearances, yet they cannot but be look'd upon as Innocent, when they are consider'd with regard to the Intention with which the *Chinese* practice them.

Let the third Supposition be, that the following Calumny is brought to *Rome*. The Jesuits have caus'd to be Painted at the Entrance of their Church in *Pekin*, a Mystery of our holy Religion, and, Oh Abomination! Have mix'd therewith a Fable of *Paganism*. They have there expos'd a Picture of the General Judgment, wherein is to be seen our Saviour environ'd with all his Saints, ready to pronounce the last Sentence against the Impious. In this very Picture under the Eyes of Jesus Christ, who will that Day take Vengeance upon *Paganism*, is to be seen *Charon* with his Boat, passing the Souls of the Damned from one side of the *Styx* to the other.

What wou'd they say to such an Accusation, were it embellish'd with all the Figures and Ornaments it is capable of? Nevertheless, This Picture I here mention, is no other than that of the famous *Michael Angelo*, which all Strangers look upon and admire in the Pope's Chappel of the Vatican, without being Scandaliz'd; and indeed, shall that which is manifestly no more than the Effect of the lively and elevated Fancy of the Painter, become a just Subject of Scandal and Horror?

REFLEXION IX.

BUT what if a *Chinese* should come into our Catholick Countries, might not he be able to Censure and Reproach us with our Ceremonies from some likeness they may seem to bear with those of *China*? Let us examin this in another Supposition.

Let us suppose then that a *Mandarin*, well instructed in the Disputes of the time, and who has learnt a little *Italian* in his Voyage, comes to *Rome*, and that he is present at high Mass. He sees the Priest, who with the Thurible in his Hand perfumes the Altar from one end to the other; and he asks of the Standers-by, the meaning of that Ceremony. They answer him, that this Incense is burnt in Honour of the Blessed Sacrament, and that it is a sacred Tribute paid to the Divine Eucharist.

In the Afternoon this *Mandarin* returns back to the same Church, and being curious to observe the Ceremonies that are practis'd in *Rome* at the Burial of the Dead, he assists at the Obsequies of a deceas'd Person. After the Singing of Psalms is over, he observes the Priest clad in his Sacerdotal Vestments, with the same Thurible he made use of in the Morning, to offer Incense to Almighty God, going round the Bier, and incensing the dead Corps.

What's this I behold, says the *Chinese*? Those who are round about him, and who penetrate no deeper than he into this mysterious Action, answer him coldly, That he sees the Priest offer Incense. Is there some Divinity lies hid in this Carcass, replies he? A silly ignorant old Woman of the Company puts in her Opinion, and tells him, that this sweet Smoak descends even into Purgatory it self, and refreshes very much the poor Soul of the deceas'd. A prophane Poet standing by, adds, That 'tis a Ceremony deriv'd from the *Pagans*, who in like manner offer'd Incense at the Burials of their Dead, and backs it with a Verse of *Virgil* in the Description of the Funeral of *Misenus*:

Congesta cremantur thurea dona.

Upon

Upon that, a Man of Learning draws near to the *Mandarin*, and whispers him in the Ear : Sir, don't heed what such folks as these tell you. This Action which you see, is purely an Ecclesiastical Honour, which is done to the deceas'd, in token that he departed one of the number of the Faithful, and in the bosom of the Catholick Church : But these grains of Incense, adds the *Chinese*, are they not burnt in his honour, as I my self saw this Morning burning in honour of God ? Can you shew in all your Canonical Books one single Example, which proves, that in the Old Law they ever presented Incense to any other than the true God ? You give then to this dead Person the same Worship, the same Honour as to the Almighty. I beg your Pardon, Sir, says the Learned Man, the Intention is the Soul of these sort of Actions, which of themselves are indifferent. Different Motives render the same Ceremony sometimes a Divine Worship, sometimes an Honour meerly Ecclesiastical, and sometimes purely Civil.

This is the very Case, continues the *Mandarin*, and you do the self-same thing which you reprehend in our Practise in reference to *Confucius*, and those Pictures in which are written the Names of our deceas'd Ancestors. Our Idiots, like yours, comprehend not the Mystery of these Ceremonies, and without Reflexion propose to themselves some End quite different from that of others. An Idolater with no more Wit than this good old Woman, may have some idle Whim in his Head : But those who with us are Men of Learning, as you are here, are perfectly satisfy'd, that no more than a civil Honour is design'd. This is their Intention ; this is the Sense of our Classic Writers, who prescribe these sort of Ceremonies. Such likewise is the Declaration that has been made by the Emperor throughout all *China* ; nor did it ever enter into our Imaginations, so much as to Dream that the Souls shou'd stick to those Pictures like Flies, or slide into the Names that appear there : Wild Notions ! Wherewith some illiterate *Europeans* have fill'd all those parts. The Faith of the Christians of *China* is no less pure than the Faith of the Christians of these Countries ; Heaven be prais'd for it, says the learned Catholick.

How now, says the *Chinese*, do you also adore Heaven? No, answers the *Roman*, but by this Word we understand the Lord of Heaven. 'Tis also the Master of Heaven, says the *Mandarin*, whom we denote by this Expression.

REFLEXION X.

PERhaps my Stile may appear too light for the Subject, but I beg of the Reader not to oblige me to alter it. He will see, that the Matter shall not be the less serious, but that it is necessary to treat it after this Manner, to give a right Idea of the Nature of the *Chinese* Ceremonies, by comparing them with certain innocent things amongst us, which are practis'd without the least Scruple.

Let us then not depart from our *Mandarin*, who after the Service takes a turn about the Church, and examines the Chappels belonging to it. He makes a Stop at one; the Altar of which is adorn'd with two *Dii Termini* plac'd on each side in lieu of Colours, as is also to be seen in several Parts of *Italy*. What Species of Men do I discover, says he? They have only a Head, Neck and Shoulders: I see neither Belly, Legs, nor Feet. Answer is made, that they are Ornaments of Architecture call'd *Termini*. They are, says a Man of Letters, *Mercurius Vertumni & Dii Termini*, the *Greeks*, and the *Romans* ador'd them, but at present, serve only to beautify the Places where they are made use of.

What! Reply'd the *Mandarin*, do you employ the Figures of Devils to adorn the Altar of the true God? Under favour, Sir, don't you see little Wings peeping out of the Shoulders? That ought to satisfy you, that they are Angels, altho' as to the rest those Statues resemble *Pagan* Divinities. That is to say, replies the *Chinese*, you have grafted two Angels upon two Devils. With Permission, Sir, don't offer to say so, all the World wou'd laugh at it. You are only Scandaliz'd, because you look upon these Works with a *Chinese* Eye. Were you to remain some time in *Europe*, and look upon them with the same Eye that we do, you wou'd soon discover, that these sort of things have no relation at all to Religion, and you wou'd be the first to laugh at the Scandal you now take.

Coming

Coming out of the Church, the *Mandarin* proceeds in his Walk about the City of *Rome*, accompany'd with a Crowd of the Curious, who are pleas'd to see his Amazements. What Church is that, says he? 'tis answer'd, the Temple of the *Minerva*, it belongs to the *Dominicans*. This *Minerva* is some Saint, I suppose, of the Holy Order of *St. Dominick*. Oh fie! Sir! Far from being a Saint: this *Minerva* is a Goddess of the Gentiles, which was hammer'd out of the Head of another Deity. And are these good Fathers Christians? Oh! Not the less for that. Why then do they adore this Goddess? God forbid, they pay no Worship to her. But tell me then in the Church of *St. Peter*, don't you Honour *St. Peter*? don't you Honour *St. Andrew* in the Church that bears his Name? This Temple is not at all Dedicated to *Minerva*, it only retains the Name, because it is built in the Place where anciently there stood one consecrated to that Goddess. And do they permit the People, replies the *Mandarin*, to call it by so Impious and Profane a Name? What wou'd you say of the Jesuits of *Cbina*, shou'd they suffer the converted *Chinese* to call a Temple Dedicated under the Invocation of *Mary* the blessed Mother of Jesus, the Church of *Xaca*, or *Amida*? There is no Ground of Scandal, Sir; a long Use join'd with some Grains of Allowance, has stript this Manner of Speech from all Impiety: But 'tis what you will never understand, unless you continue among us long enough to be accusom'd to the Language, and Ideas of the *Europeans*. They go on in their Discourse.

What is that Spire* Erected against the Church, and the Meaning on't? What are those Cyphers, those strange Figures wrought upon it? They are, say they, the Remnants of the Idolatry and Superstition of the *Egyptians*; and some of those Figures represent the Gods, that is to say, the Devils which that People ador'd. And are not the Dominican Fathers uneasy at such Abominations before the Church of the true God? If you consider'd, say they, these Objects with our Eyes, you wou'd take them for what they are barely for

* The Obelisk Erected before the Convent of *Minerva*.

Ornaments of the Place, according to the Intention of him that caus'd this Obelisk to be Erected, not as a sacred Memorial of Idolatry, but as a Monument recommended only by its Antiquity.

What means that Cross upon the top of the Spire? Were those Devils reconcil'd to the Church? did they become Christians? Forbear such Expressions, they are no less than Blasphemy. The Reason of my speaking thus, is, because upon Occasion of a like Cross on the top of a Pillar in a Church-Yard, I was told that the Cross was a sign that all those who were buried in that Place were Christians. Sir, it has been often said, that you must have Regard to the different Intentions, and we alone are capable of informing you what they are. The Cross plac'd on the Pillar in the Church-Yard signifies what you say, but on the top of this Spire, it Teaches us that it has Triumph'd over the Devils that are under it. The answer is good; but suppose our *Chinese* as incredulous in the case of your Intentions, as you are of theirs, shou'd continue to be Scandaliz'd at the Sight of these diabolical Figures in the Middle of a publick Place, wou'd you throw down this Monument, which Represents to the Eyes the shameful Relicks of a detestable Idolatry? Well! I leave it to you Gentlemen of *China*, my Country-Men, to judge, whether *Rome* wou'd have so much complaisance, as to suffer such a loss as even this, which might draw after it the Ruin of so many other Pyramids much more Majestick, and which are the Wonders of this Queen of Cities.

But why at least don't they forbid the Carnaval throughout all Christendom; I heard the Preacher this Morning affirm it to be a Rag of Idolatry. They don't forbid it, Sir, because such a prohibition, altho' holy, wou'd cause a Commotion among People. S. *Charles Barromeus*, whose Name you must have heard from the Jesuits in *China*, was resolv'd one time to abolish the Carnaval in a City of *Italy*, and the Mutiny was so great, that to render ineffectual the Order of that Prelate, Deputies were sent to *Rome*. If the Inhabitants of that City had submitted to it, says the *Chinese*, wou'd they not have lost their Dignities, their Goods, and perhaps their

Lives?

Lives? No, Sir, they ran no hazard of such Losses as those. But it is sufficient for you to know, that the Church is a Tender and Compassionate Mother, who shuts her Eyes to a great many things, when they are not bad; and to avoid greater Evils, dissembles small Imperfections. She Roots out Abuses, but 'tis by degrees: And the Spirit which Animates her, permits her not for trifles, to excite amongst her Children a long Series of troubles and vexatious Disputes.

I see then, replies the *Chinese* in a serious tone, the Old Christians, and who for a long time have been such, have extraordinary privileges. These traces of Idolatry which you conserve in your Names, at this time, in your Feasts, Statues, Pictures and Churches, are become trifles with you. You infect, without restraint, with the Ordures of Paganism, even Heaven it self, of which you leave not one Inch undefil'd. The Stars which with so much Lustre denounce the Glory of God, cannot with you finish their carriere, but under the opprobrious Names in false Divinities. All this causes of you neither horror nor confusion: There is nothing that you cannot save by means of your Intention; and the Church forbears to Condemn you, for fear of Contristating her dear Children. If so, is it likely but this good Mother will upon us *Chinese* as her Children, whom she has newly brought forth, and are, as I may say, yet hanging at her Breasts? Ah! we live at too great a distance; too wide an extent of Sea separates us from *Europe*.

When the Case is about you, they are afraid of Murmurings, and even light Disturbances. When the concern is ours, whom you do not value, you resolve without difficulty to force us to Renounce all the honourable Employes of the Kingdom, to which only the learned are admitted, and which Title is only allowed to those who Offer to *Confucius*, not Sacrifices, as you say, but Presents, which imply no more than a meer civil Worship, you little care that we be reduc'd, and that upon weak Conjectures, to the hard necessity of passing our Lives among the Dregs of the People, if yet the Anger of a despis'd Monarch cut not the Thread asunder, or to renounce the Obedience which we owe to the Pope, and to
the

the Law of *Jefus Chrift*. We have made our Tears to flow, as I may fay, as far as *Rome*; we have fent thither Authentick Atteftations, which certify'd the Innocence of our Ceremonies. What has been done to Comfort thefe poor defolate *Chriftians*? I Repeat it again; this good Mother looks not upon us as her Children; and our great Distance hinders the Effects of her tendernels.

Our Remonftrances have fignify'd nothing in *China*; they have been torn before the Faces of the Suppliants that prefented them. Our Emperor has publiſh'd his Declarations in vain; nay, we have been forbid to confult him concerning our Ceremonies, altho' he is the lawful Interpreter of them. All Endeavours have been us'd, to make us appear Idolaters, whether we wou'd or no. But when our Maſters ſhall be driven away, and that we ſhall be Orphans without Fathers, without Sacraments, without any one to aſſiſt us at our deaths, the God of *Chriftians*; your God and ours will he too ſhut his Ears to our Complaints, and his Eyes to our Miſery and Tears? He who has in his Power the moſt terrible Scourges, who makes the Earth to tremble, and lays it waſte when he pleaſes by War, and Mortality, will he not to be Reveng'd of thoſe, who ſhall have pluck'd up his Vineyard at the time, when juſt upon the Point of rendring Fruit in abundance?

REFLEXION XL

TIS not before ſome ſecret Tribunal, whoſe Myſteries are not to be penetrated, that the Affair of the Ceremonies of *China* is tranſacted: 'Tis in the Face of the World, and before all the Learned. Who have before them the Matter of Fact, and in their Hands the Books, the Informations, the Depoſitions.

All the World knows, that the Emperor of *China* conſulted by the Jeſuits, in a Writing drawn up on Purpoſe, has answer'd in his own Hand, and declar'd by an Imperial Decree, that the Ceremonies which make the Subject of the preſent diſpute, are meerly civil, and that the Senſe and Meaning which the Fathers affix to them, is exact and conformable to Truth. He who ſhou'd ſay, that the Emperor upon this Oc-

caſion

casion has publish'd a Lye in the Face of his whole Empire; would in all likelihood judg of the Conduct of this great Prince by his own. So rash a Sentence will never come from the Mouth of any Man of Honour whatsoever: And I shall never persuade my self, that the Pope will offer so provoking an Affront to a Prince, who, tho' a *Pagan*, loves and favours the Christian Religion.

'Tis also well known that the Learned of *China* (of whose Intentions 'tis not permitted to doubt, after the Declaration they have made) and that all the Missioners, amongst whom are several Dominicans, assure the same thing with the Emperor.

In fine, no Body can be ignorant, (and a Bishop of *China* of the Order of St. *Augustin*, observes it in the Appeal he sends to *Rome*;) no Body can be ignorant, I say, *Chinese* Language is so difficult, and obscure, that whatever Pains an *European* takes in the learning it, he shall never Arrive to so much Knowledge of it, as the least of the Doctors of the Nation. This makes it plain, that we are not to ask the Explanation of the *Chinese* Books from an illiterate *European*, but from the Learned of the Country, and principally from their Head, that is, the Emperor who has already explain'd himself in the Name of the whole Empire.

The Pope, the Cardinals, the Consulters, in a Word, those who at *Rome* bear a Part in Judging this grand Affair, have never study'd the *Chinese* Language. Their decision then must needs rely upon the Report of Witnesses, and those Witnesses ought, without doubt, to be the ablest Men in the Language, and to have the most perfect Knowledge of the Books, and the Intention wherewith the *Chinese* practice their Ceremonies.

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